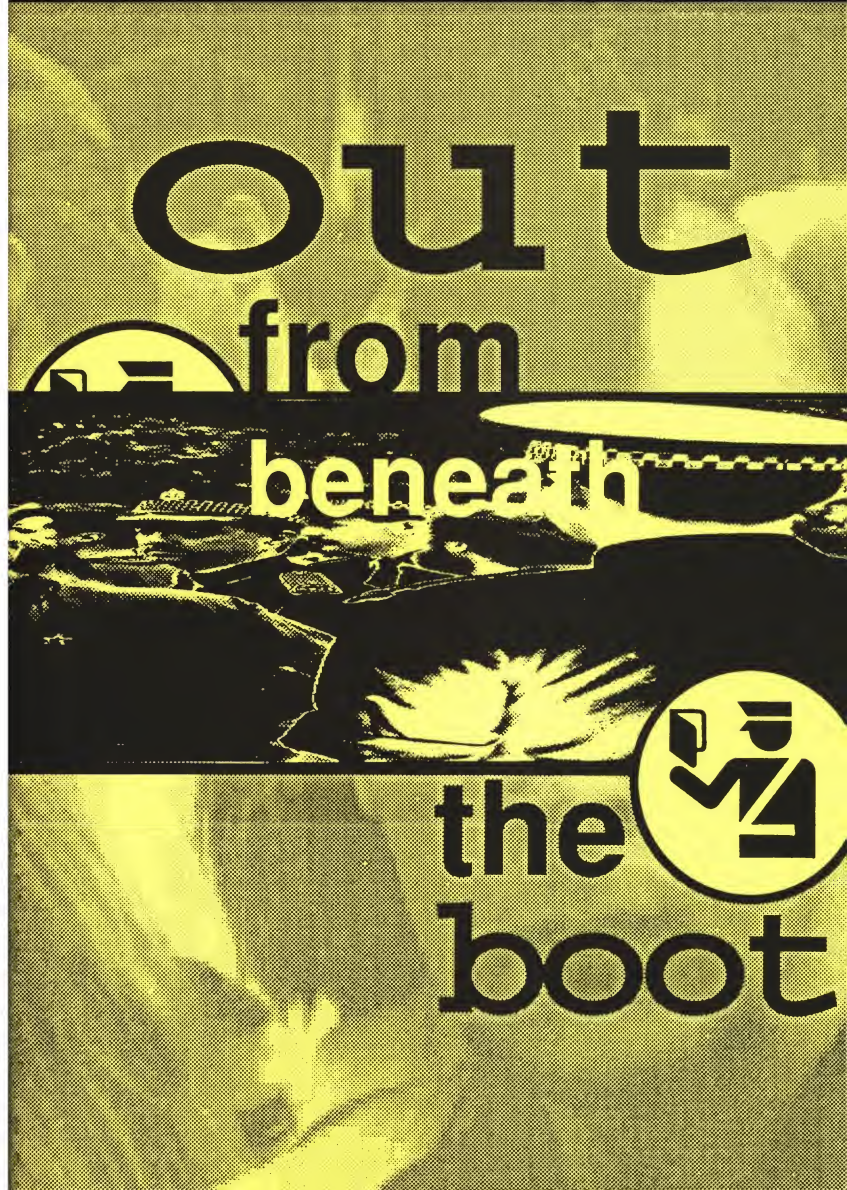


out

from

beneath

the
boot



LET'S SEE, I CALLED TO MY TRIBE...

*Let's see, I called to my tribe and said: let's see,
whoever we are, whatever we do, whatever we think.
The palest of them, of us,
Answered me with other eyes,
with another injustice, with his flag.
That was the enemy camp.
Maybe that man had the right
to kill my truth, that's what happened
to me and to my father, and so it goes on.
But I suffered as if they bit me.*

from **The Bell and the Sea**, Pablo Neruda 1973
Translated by John Manson

OUT FROM BENEATH THE BOOT :

Number 3

EDITED BY JIM FERGUSON

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INTRODUCTION

This edition of **Out From Beneath The Boot** contains no poetry or prose about trees, flowers, abstract philosophical argument, or aesthetics. Any arguments about aesthetics are inherent in the work. It does contain writing by folk who have strong opinions about what is happening with and to human beings in the world. It is generally left wing, though not exclusively, and unlikely to make comfortable reading for the average political party hack, academics interested in apolitical literary theories, or indeed any supporter of present Western elite power structures. Although masochistic folk from the above mentioned might get a certain kick. Especially those lucky enough to work for the forces of censorship and state security, eg. The Daily Record, HM Inspectorate of Schools MI5 etc. I hope folk find something thought provoking, moving or plain different within these covers.

Pablo Neruda, 1904 - 1973: a life of struggle

Pablo Neruda, the internationally acclaimed Chilean poet, died on the 23rd of September 1973. This edition is intended, in a small way, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the poet's death.

Neruda was both a lyric poet and a poet of fierce political commitment. He was deeply influenced by the Spanish civil war and the murder of his friend Federico Garcia Lorca. From 1936 on wards he tried to address a wider public, rather than seeing poetry as an elite pursuit of the rich and educated.

In 1945 he joined the Chilean Communist Party and was elected Senator for the Tarapaca and Antofagasta provinces. These inhospitable desert provinces were dominated by the copper and nitrate mining industries. From 1949 to 1952 Neruda was forced into exile by the corrupt government of Gabriel Gonzales.

Always prolific, his work was translated into many languages and in 1971 he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature. He died shortly after the coup in Chile which ousted and murdered

Allende. His funeral became one of the first demonstrations against the military government; he died and was buried as he had lived - fighting for socialism, peace and justice.

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Alison Reid

she will no doubt learn

she will no doubt learn
to cry in foreign tongue
to ask for drugs
to salve the pain
she will no doubt learn
that people are the same
no matter where they come from
or what their crime
she will no doubt learn
that in this race
only the rats survive
and so she'll hide in the sewers
like the rest
fur matted, swollen bellied
trusting no-one
she will no doubt learn
that in such a place
truth is ruthless
and afraid,
she will no doubt learn
that, in such a place
dreams are useless

Stella Coombe

BANGLADESH

One banana, two bananas, three bananas, four bananas. The insertion of fruit ensures I don't go too fast or slow, each digit couple with a banana denoting one second. Usually I get bored around two hundred and odds, then I'll start to pace up and down the platform instead, trying not to look at my watch too often. I light another cigarette and inspect my shoes as I inspect the platform, counting how many size eights fit into each flagstone, kicking stones, avoiding cracks and eyes.

Time is money, if I weren't so proud I'd be crossing the tracks, collecting up the discarded Irn bru bottles from the undergrowth opposite. One pound twenty's worth visible to my naked eye, probably more with a little scrabbling. I can't be bothered and begin counting again, waiting for the train to arrive.

There's a billboard opposite, a perfectly obscenity. The slogan reads BE MORE THAN A WANNABE. Twanging at manmade inadequacies, it makes me feel sick. And guilty. I feel sick because I feel guilty. In a split second I evaluate my life which I relive all at once inside my head at dream speed. I am discontented. It works. A faceless suit has a grip on me. A slick ad-man in a smart leather chair in London is exposing my unfulfilment, lifting the lid from a can of worms marked 'lost ambition'. Without asking.

The Herald says 'One Hundred Thousand Dead'. I am immune. One hundred thousand. Dead. I have to feel something, must conjure up an emotional response. Jeez, Little House on the Prairie made me cry for fucks sake. 100,000 bloated bodies and I don't give a shit. Carry on as normal, none of my concern. A pound in the collecting can buys off guilt, absolves me of responsibility.

The fact that I don't care, have an inability to see beyond the end of my own nose, disturbs me.
One hundred thousand. Dead.

I must imagine.

I empty tubes of Smarties onto the lounge carpet. Then boxes, followed by the contents of cardboard walking sticks, the type you were given at Christmas as a child, with shiny red plastic handles. I begin to count. Am I knee deep or chest deep?

Perhaps they reach high above my head and I drown in a sea of primary coloured covered chocolate. The weight of my head breaks my neck as I struggle against a tidal wave of 100,000 Smarties, like a child drowning in a grain store. I arrange the letters from inside the lids to spell out ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DEAD, in different colours. Indifferent. Smarties fill the room, reach the ceiling, they crack and compound squeezing out the air.

It doesn't help, my mind wanders. I think about orange Smarties and how they were banned from America, try to remember whether that was a true story, or an urban folktale.

I begin to count in bananas again, reaching just over a hundred when the overdue train arrives. I head for a couldn't care less evening of drinking and laughter.

In the pub I am unable to relax, enjoy myself. There is something eating at me and I can't quite put my finger on what it is. It spoils my night.

WITNESS

Plastic handles cut into my fingers and the bags almost touch the floor, wrenching at my shoulders. I glare at bustling shoppers, daring them to come to close, to just try banging into me and send my carriers into a tourniquet strangling my hands. My jeans hang too heavily choking my waist, clammy, the back of my neck is coated with sweat and my feet are twice their usual size, determined to burst from the leather which envelops them. Should have put my shorts on - bloody weather.

I trudge into the mall and heave the bags over the side of a stray trolley which I wheel towards a bench crowded with gossiping grey pensioners. Bagless people passing the time of day and chatting in community centre fashion. Finding a space at the end of the bench, I sit down and light a cigarette, minding my own business. Determined not to catch a friendless eye should they start smalltalking at me. I am not in the mood, in a bad mood. Can't be bothered politely patronising anyone in the obligatory way, it's too hot.

I am tempted to sit here for hours, dreading the walk home - too short a distance for a bus and not worth risking the wrath of a taxi driver but far enough on foot to leave arm muscles aching long into the following day, when you can't figure out why. Arriving home, collapsing in the door like an end of race athlete through the ribbon, without the glory. Small wonder the surrounding streets are littered with abandoned metal trolleys. Sixty pounds each they cost I heard - a small fortune scattered around the scheme, but nobody bothers, I don't expect there's much of a market for knocked off trolleys.

On the wall opposite the bench, there is a cautionary poster: IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE TO REMOVE SHOPPING TROLLEYS FROM THE VICINITY OF THE CAR PARK. Of

course it falls on deaf ears - the last of anyones worries, cheaper than a cab, that's for sure.

To my right, the teddy grabbing machine is hugged by high pitched children, being robbed of their pocket money in broad daylight. Supposedly there's knack to it, it's all in the timing. Much as I've tried I've been unable to win anything, the chrome crane claws pathetically at thin air, jolting rudely to a halt. I once saw a man emptying a plastic bag full of multicoloured made in Hong Kong fun fur into the machine, so I expect someone has cracked it - at a cost.

I crush the cigarette under my boot and push the messages towards the exit, where I wait for someone to open the door allowing me to slip out. Before leaving, I hear the familiar tone of a woman shouting at the top of her voice under her breath. Turning my head, trying not to stare because it isn't the done thing, I see the woman bearing over the two boys, carbon copies of one another except for their height, and she's well past the wait till I get you home stage. The eyes of the older boy blink and cringe as she slaps at him, too hard, her hand flailing like something clock work. Wanting to run but too terrified, the boy submits, his younger brother whining and trying in vain to protect by darting in front of him. The boys are well dressed and clean in cheerful shorts and T-shirts, but thin and dark and cowed.

"Move. Stay there. Just wait till I come out." she spits as she slaps, swiping at the boy's body which he tries to shield with a scrawny bruised arm, frustrating her more. She hurls the frame of the younger boy aside, takes a final cuff at the taller boy who sways from foot to foot, somehow rooted and too petrified to duck. Her palm lands a hard blow squarely on his cheek and she marches off, towards a row of stacked trolleys - leaving the boys crying. A pathetic freeze frame.

Shoppers go about their business in a hear, speak, see no evil kind of way. Someone pushes open the door and I dodge outside before it pulls to. Angry with myself.

Jim Craig

1916

In Flanders' Fields
the young men died
in Freedom's sacred cause,
while nearer home
their comrades tried
to enforce their alien laws
on an Irish population
determined to be free,
once more a sovereign nation
who'd die for liberty.

The I.C.A. and Volunteers
had come to make a stand,
they'd cast aside
their doubts and fears
to free their native land.
For seven days
and seven nights
against armoured cars and guns,
the Starry Plough still on its height,
they fought Britannia's Huns.

At Jacobs' factory and Boland's Mill
they made the Saxon bleed his fill
and in the fight
at Carlisle Bridge
their loyalty to
Freedom's pledge
kept their place,
in the nation's heart
for in their death
they played their part
for Ireland's Liberty.

Brian Whittingham

THE BASRA ROAD

Jack's on the telly
autographing a Tomahawk Cruise
as he would
a plastered leg,
newsreel smiles
for the folks
back home

rat-tat-tat-tat

anti-aircraft guns,
Christmas light tracer fire
chill wind sirens

rat-tat-tat-tat

Thunderbolts,
Tornados and
Skyhawks
soar

rat-tat-tat-tat

like
United Nation Bush

rat-tat-tat-tat
rat-tat-tat-tat
rat-tat-tat-tat

Tel Aviv Scuds
and Silkworms fired
from Russian Migs
and French Mirages,
500
civilians
rot
in a Baghdad bunker
and Nero-like, Saddam
scorches on

rat-tat-tat-tat

Hornets,
Prowlers and
Tomcats
fly

rat-tat-tat-tat

flaring oil-wells
blacken
ultramarine

rat-tat-tat-tat

centre spread Patriot,
Sea-Dart and
Maverick missiles,
Eagle Comic
exploded views,
Dan Dare
and the Mekons

rat-tat-tat-tat
rat-tat-tat-tat
rat-tat-tat-tat

olive green uniforms,
a scrapyard of
burnt out shells
with Kuwaiti trinkets
the Basra Road
littered

Dali-style.

Stephen McGerry

WHEN IT WILL STOP!

The next time you hear what they call our fighters
Bloody Sunday, Loughall, Gibraltar, Diplock courts and the
[Hunger Strikers

The shoot to kill, show trials and State executions
Remember, it's them who know the real Solutions

The Brits have tried to take our every right
Another reason to stand up and fight
For far too long we've suffered injustice and lies
We'll no longer sit back with just murmurs and sighs

The time has come to take up the gun
It's now their turn to mourn the loss of sons
The Brits aren't safe while they decide to stay
It will only stop on unification day

Some people say that there's another way
But how do we go about getting a say
We can't hear our leaders speak in the media
This rule applies even in 26 county Eire

When Ireland's free and out of British hands
It's only then they'll lay down their arms
Until that day the fight goes on
And we'll show the sticks their ways are wrong

Hugh Healy

BEFORE THE KILLING STARTED

Did you see him, wee Mr King?
Defence Secretary nae less
went to the Gulf (got a nice tan)
said brave words to a' our lads
got his photo ta'en on top o' a tank
like a real sodger
wi' a beret and everything

CAME HOME BEFORE THE KILLING STARTED

Next there was Charlie
Prince O' Wales an' a' that
went to the Gulf (a break fae the wife)
said brave words to a' our lads
got his photo ta'en on top o' a tank
like a real sodger
wi' a beret and everything

CAME HOME BEFORE THE KILLING STARTED

Then there was John Major
him fae number ten
went to the Gulf (as Maggie would)
said brave words to a' our lads
got his photo ta'en on top o' a tank
like a real sodger
wi' a beret and everything

CAME HOME BEFORE THE KILLING STARTED

Young Andy Turner from Maryhill Rd.
joined the army to get off the dole
went to the Gulf (he hadn't much choice)
wore his beret wi' pride
as real sodgers do
was left cremated in a burnt tank

pity he couldnae come hame

BEFORE THE KILLING STARTED

Jack

God Given Right

Accuser - Male

Accused - Female

Evidence - None

Verdict - Guilty

Judge - Male

Plea - Ignored

Sentence - Death

Executioner - Male

Crime - Witch

Alex McLarty

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO A YOUNG LESBIAN FRIEND

A person of independent mind
is worth a thousand o' the ither kind
wha hum an' haw an' puff and blow
an' pretend tae know,
everything.
"You mustnae dae this, you'll be in a stew.
Why WE know whit's best for you."
So they say.
But the proble:n is, I find,
sic folk ha'nea got an independent mind.
An' that's a shame,
for it's no really their blame.
They've been brainwashed sae lang
they dinnae ken whit's right or wrang
about some things.
There's some can be pitied an' wi' patience won oer,
tae see how ignorant their views were before.
But ithers are hypocrites, o' them beware,
they say one thing but dae anither.
So enjoy your birthday, wi' your independent mind,
that's worth a thousand o' the ither kind.
Enjoy yourself wi' peace o mind,
for this year, many new friends you'll find
tae add tae the happiness you've already found.

Karen Thomson

Liberation Be Fuck

I free me
I dont need you
I dont want your
"let's be equal"
Offers
Of limited liberation
Whoever heard of the Captor
Setting the captives free
And meaning it.

Palestine

Your children
are
clubbed
shot
starved
jailed
exiled
daily

and yet
they stand as one
taking on
the mighty forces of imperialism
with stones in their hands
visions of emancipation
in their eyes
who remembers the story
of David and Goliath

Kiss

I need a kiss
A real kiss
An unphysical kiss
that releases
only
the darkness of my belly
It shall be
an unhidden kiss
an unprisoned kiss
an unbarbedwire dream of a kiss
an impossibility without sight

Poem about the Home Office fascists attacking a church in order to deport Viraj Mendis

They came for you
as we slept
from Hurd to Holmes
Jack-boots shone to perfection
They wanted you Viraj
as they wanted Connolly &
Mandela in their time
You were
the whipping boys
to remind us
not to overstep
the fucking mark

What now Viraj?

You dodge nooses in Sri Lanka
I choke slowly on Silence
the deportations continue

Life as usual goes on

Rab Fulton

poem written in response tae thi deportation o john matthews

noo thit
michael howard
is oor nations
gerdian judge
n exectionur
thi state
isnae satisfied
wae thi auld
waye its been
seen tae be
soarta daein
sumhin aboot
irish republicin
bombs in england

thi houndin
interrin waeoot
crime nor trial
o irish faimlies
n individuals
fae sheffield
ti isle o wight
nae langer suffices
- thi hingin
loabbies voice
in cabinet
wahnts ti mak
a real example

wahnts n needs
a true flesh
n banes nae
nonsense cauld
oan thi slab
instince o instint
fast track firm
british justice

john matthews
sent ti derry
media kennin
eez a terrorist
hame secretary
sed so eezsel
nae evidence
nae trial
yit nae doot
a terrorist

this a new
waye tae git
justice done
usually thi
namin o names
is whispirt
security forces
simply quietly
haun info
aboot suspectit
republicin activists
tae loyal
extremists then
seal n secure

thi relivint
targit area

noo names
faces places
o residence
o ony suspect
wull be shown
oan prime time
international t.v.
thur wull be
nae room fur
ambiquity oar
doot oar appeal
hingin judges
(fuckn shit n
scum o society)
hae aye kent
corpses dinnae
ask questions

sweet jesu!
sweet fuck!
thi voice fur
democracy cries
oot fur sumdae
tae gerd
these gerdians
tae judge
these judges
tae execute
these executionurs

Dorothy Clark

LONELY LOSER

See since big Tommys went sober.
Sno use.
Hivny hud a turn affa him fur chrise knows how long.
A mean a know ma job.
Know whit am doin know whit a mean.

So a take a wee drink now and again.
A can pass massel as well as the next.
Ask anybody.
Never ever like big Tommy used ti.
Chrise he bit a polis dug.

Big Tommys big time now.
Nae wee corner shops fur him.
Aw naw.
Right inti the big stuff.
Banks an aw that
an its chester barrys an the rollexs
an the bee-em-fucken-double yoos.

Whit gets me whit really gets me
hes that fucken happy.
Bastarts brain damaged.

Any chance i a drink pal.

Bobby Christie

pint ae thi black stuff

runs doon thi throat
sweet
guts feel better fur it

cunt ae a price
fuck
whit kin yi dae

sit doon quiet
aw
jist me n ma pint

tourist

look in thi eyes
drunkn bastard
cannae even staun

fuckn kick him
disnae feel nothing
yi oan yur holidays

whit planet yi fae
no this side ae toon
two bob gets yi a taxi

walk doon thi road
wid hiv yi in a minute
shoes n aw

talkin

celtic hiv nae chance
no wae that board

rangers ur jist too good
even baefore a ball is kicked

its thi last ten years
fuckn west is so strong

look at this country
fucks sake kin dae whit they want

see if labour get in
its stull a lost cause

tell yi petrol bombs
thats whit wae need

job fur thi barmaid

bucket n fuckn mop
tae wash up thi sick

fuckn pricks fuckn men
cannae hod yir drink

she belts bloody carpet
thi sick smashes up

intae thi air

Joe Murray

I've only one more thing to say to you

...and with your sneering smirk
at my frustrated anger
you walk back to your
desk where you dump *my* life in *your*
social security filing cabinet
and eat a water biscuit with your
well earned coffee
which you take black no sugar
to kid yourself on that you've got
a special K waistline which you
haven't you fat bastard.

Whit a Bummer

Ah wis staunin wi mah pals...
hivin a pint, know?
well, this wee burds shoulder bag
wis ticklin mah bum.
so, Ah made a joke aboot it
an we aw laughed.
see when she wis leavin the pub
she came ower n felt ma bum
n made a wee crack,
n we aw laughed again.
bit, see when Ah went tae
buy the next round...
ma wallit wis away.

Paul Birtill

The Lavatory Attendant

Goes to work
at his own convenience
angry and demoralized
sits on a stool
and dreams of nice places...

In they trickle
Coughing spitting
Splashing about
I take out a book
but it doesn't help...

The smell is awful
The clients surly
Can't bear to eat my
sandwich. If only
I'd passed an exam
or two this job is hell..

There's sick on the floor
and a couple are screwing
in a cubicle I should
really say something
but what's the point
This isn't a job
it's an insult...

5-30 the shitting
and pissing is over
time to lock up
My clothes stink
and I just want to
get drunk...

from Two Short Love Poems

. Lazy

How can I fall in love
I can't even muster the
energy to clean out the toilet

Jim McSharry

LITTLE BIT OF LOVE

Life is often strange
when it comes to
push and shove

But never is it stranger
when it comes down to love

Some guys go out dancin
in armani shirts
lookin fur wuman
or chasin bitsa skirt

Some guys take up drinkin
and bevy till it hurts
fancy aw the barmaids
as drunkenly they flirt

And herein lies a warning
about love
its cost
and strife

if yer lookin fur ah a wuman
or mibbe just a wife
it's better
to have loved
and lost

Than been a wanker
aw yer life!

John Malley

Imitation of Life

I am the black maid's daughter,
I pass for white, deny my colour
for a safe passage in an ugly
world, undo myself, living a lie.
I wear this mask, heavy as iron,
vanquished by a vicious taboo,
a tongue with no voice, a heart
without love, dying for survival.
One day freedom will find me,
weeping for my big black mammy,
I know now she prays for me,
awaits with flowers my arrival.

Passionlessness

I have not the vocabulary, nor
courage, for that thing called
love, flights of fancy sail up
above me, I ignore the barrage,
the blaze in my undercarriage.
Passion is my crushed, dried
flower, tucked tight in a dog-
eared book, oh I dare not look.
Let me go quietly, though my
knickers be sodden, a Scotched
corpse in a sexual Culloden.

Gay In GLasgow

First, it's frank to say that from myself
in this fair city I've been a fugitive,
running scared in Roy Orbison's blue vein,
my love and locale loathed and laughed at.
Second, let it be allowed aloud my mouth
is mine to sing songs of sex, pro-creation,
to nurture every fruity and nutty nuance,
yet still to feel at home in my own nation.
Third, I'd like to think that I can count
on being more than tholed, I'd be thankful
if I could share the fruits of the flight
to have our stolen lives and stories told.
Glasgow and me, steeped in stormy blether,
let we two struggle and flourish together.

Langston

I wandered lonely as a closet gay,
the shrinking violet with bright
ideas, cowardly lion with knocking
knees and the quiet desperation
of a mad and masturbatory me
generation. Wasn't I vicious front
page gutter news? I found Langston
Hughes, counting blessings, singing
dream boogies and battling blues,
a darker brother who ate in kitchens,
Klan fire, American heartbreak.
Was he just a boy stealing stars
from a Harlem sky? I will struggle,
strive, sing. Song is a strong thing.

Janet Finlayson

HILLS TO THE SEA

We settle on hill of materialistic gadgets, and think we are on top of the world. We think we have succeeded in creativity, but we have destroyed nature's own creations. As durability fails against the competitiveness of modern demand, we throw it from the hills to the sea. One day we'll no longer keep our heads above water, and drown in all modern comforts.

from PSYCHOLOGY

Question - If Matthew can not read or write, and is from such an ignorant background, how is he so well-read in sciences, prophecies, and extra-terrestrials? How does he have such a great knowledge of this planet, when his psychotic mind spends very little time actually on it?

Carolyn Hodgman

Flat

In my flat,
I live my flat life,
Feeling flat love,
or is it convenience.

Through my Venetian bars,
Half closed,
My eyes,
My brain,
My deepest emotion,

I see the ground
From the dangerously placed
16th floor window.
Dangerously placed for me,
And my half closed closed emotions.

Jane Harris

A DIFFERENT VEIN

She marks the chapters in life
with haircuts. This latest phase
merits a trim, a new stylist
for a different vein

Keith
makes her stand, punishment
for not wanting the works
pecks forever at the fringe
clips with

are you working yourself?
somewhere special the night?

she sets her jaw
is silent
every so often
his fingers brush
her nipples, something taught
at hairschoool

how's that for you?

Keith bobs
swivels a mirror
and for the first time
she sees the scars
in each wrist,
puncture points at intervals
where they tacked him up

great
she lies and roots
for a monster tip

can you sort my lady?
her jacket and that?
Keith closets himself

seven minutes
to watch the curl of smoke
on a silkcut

Graham Fulton

ACCIDENTAL ANARCHISTS

The anarchist
is here. He
is probing
his right nostril
with the pinkie of
his right hand,
digging
with a rare passion,
pulling it out
and looking before
he pops
the treasure into his mouth
or wipes
it on the leg of the chair
asserting his right
to choose.

And the night fills
with sloppy crusaders,
wild explorers
who spend life
cutting toenails over the carpet,
cracking knuckles, chewing skin,
doing glorious desperate things,

stealing books, smoking on trains,
making strange noises with their eyelids,
mining for wax, erupting plukes,
dropping napkins
onto the floor
praying
to gods
 who spend life
belching, spitting, snoring, swearing,
breaking wind in public places,
taking a bath as the world burns, discussing
the weather the end

of
it
all -
vaginas, penises, judges, crooks
doing enchanting unsound things,
laughing at funerals, giggling in hospitals,
paddling in October detergent,
carving arrows, hearts
on trees,
watching
swans
glide between
the lemonade crate

and traffic cone
for this is
all there is
on our galloping ball of a big rock.
The right
to pop
it into

our mouths
or wipe it on
the leg of the chair.
Be
drunk
beneath a Cheshire cat moon,
pillars of unacceptable standards,
beautiful monsters of imperfection.

Tony Palumbo

LOOKING FOR A VOICE TO TELL THEIR STORY

An iron girder crashed down upon a taxi in Wales,
killing the driver;
 The darkened eyes of the smart ties behind the news-
desk hardened in disapproval
 of the men who had thrown the girder,
 and softened in a smiling tribute for the driver who
had run the daily gauntlet of striking miners,
 and for the passenger going back to work;
 A leather truncheon crashed down upon the head
of a picket,
 who had run the daily gauntlet of police-vans,
police-horses and riot shield,
 in defence of his comrades, jobs and family.
His blackened lungs too weak to call for help
as he crumpled to the ground in anonymity;
 Who told his story?

A bomb explodes in a mess-hall full of British soldiers
 serving in Northern Ireland;
 the photographs of smiling faces on the front pages,
 taken at a recent wedding reception,
 framed inside dark-rimmed spectacles of public grief,
 and viewed through the eye-glass of a single purpose.
 Give us the image of a happy young bride, now a widow.
 Beside her tall, handsome young 'groom, now a victim
 of the bomb,
 and fill the reader with revulsion at the thought
 of Irish freedom;
 A young Irishman is tortured inside a British
 army-barracks
 by the well-used techniques of the security forces,
 then is held inside a West Belfast police-station cell,
 behind the locked doors and closed mouths of the RUC,
 under laws which hold him framed without trial:
 Who tells his story?

Black youths rioting on a farm in inner London
 hacked a policeman to death.

The words and scripts of the newsreaders shook
 with horror
 in their description of Keith Blakelock, defender and
 victim of his own law,
 as he lay under the dim, one-eyed scrutiny of a
 policeman's torch,
 magnified to the nations' eyes in adjectives of outrage
 and shock;
 A black boy is beaten up in an inner city street,
 by the boots and fists of white law and order,
 for being in possession of a colour, a name and
 an accent,
 and is driven to a police station

to be quizzed about drugs he doesn't know the name
 and colour of.

As he sits under the blinding, white glare of a lamp
 in an ill-lit room;
 Who tells his story?

Prisoners rioted in a Scottish jail and took a prison
 warden hostage.

The herd's inflated bellows,
 Blowing through bombastic pronouncements dictated
 to its blacksmiths,

aired its warm praise for the bravery of warden
 Jackie Stewart,
 And vented its angry blast against the men who had
 humiliated him,
 and caused him such pain,
 by holding him hostage in a stinking, crowded,
 locked cell

and giving him a taste of the system which feeds him;
 A man, stripped of his name and branded with a number,
 and clothed and marked in the memories and the stigma
 which will stain him forever,
 suffers injury and humiliation

While he lives in the filth, and eats the filth, that
 the state provides

As his Punishment for getting in the way of twelve
 impatient people,
 who rushed the decision that locked him up
 and handed him over as a hostage to the State,
 so they could get on with their freedom;
 Who tells his story?

The truth of the State is challenged by the sword of
renegade truth;

Police, army, prison guards, cower under the media's
blanket.

And they dim our eyes and dull our ears with the shades
of their camera-lens.

The soporific drone of their talking-machine,
which pulls a screen before our eyes,
and drowns out the cries of renegades
whenever the truth of the State is beaten into them by
the brutal honesty of its batons;

Who will tell their story and lend a voice to their
silent plight?

Who will fight, to ensure that the victims of the
State's violence,
and of our own silence, don't sink in hail of bullets,
words and apathy?

While our senses are dulled, we are lulled into a
dormant calm,
by the sham of a free society:
Wake up, and tell their story.

C. A. Baldock

WHITE FEATHER, WHITE FLAG

Why is it, as we tiptoe through the minefield of Life
trying to avoid pain and distress,
behaving ourselves as best we can,
minding our business,
whenever we breathe a sigh of relief,
and imagine that we've got it made,
out jumps Fate from an ambush
holding a bloody great hand grenade.

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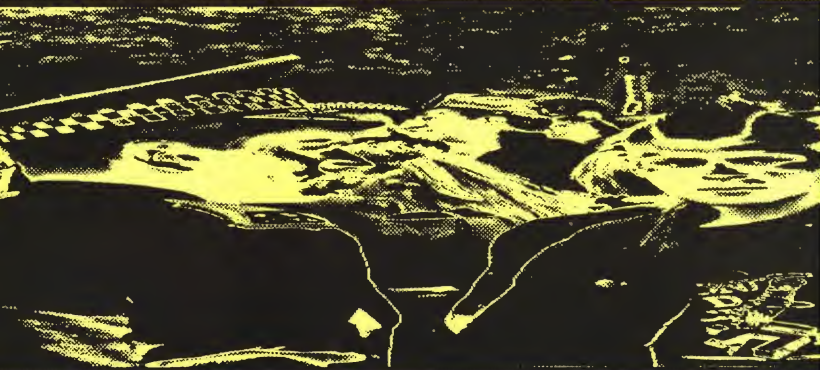
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Including:

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